



## Quarterly Cemetery Report (October/ November/December 2024)

The last quarterly Officer Cemetery Report was presented to the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 Full Council Meeting.

### Actions from last report

- **Cemetery Working Group** held a meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 to consider next steps in line with the Action Plan and the delegated tasks from the October 2024 Full Council meeting.

#### **Tasks carried out by the Cemetery Working Group included:**

- Review of the Cemetery and Memorial Regulations
- Review Cemetery Charges and Fees 2024-25 – draft recommendations for Full Council 22.1.25 and budget review.
- Submitted a response to Law Commission's Consultation Paper on Burial and Cremation
- Tree Planting locations identified
- Review of Cemetery Extension project including facilitating an Extraordinary Council Meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to progress the cemetery extension planning application. Instructions issued to the consultants DJOGS.

**See Appendix 1** of this report for a full summary of the most recent working group meeting and recommendations.

### Action Plan: Cemetery Management 3.2 - Objectives 1 and 2.

Several Objective 1 and Objective 2 tasks have been progressed/completed in the last quarter subject to approval of Full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025.

### Administration updates since the last report

#### **Interments since the last report and up to end of December 2024**

- 1 Full Burials – new grave - out of parish fee
- 7 Ashes  
(of these 7 interments all were into existing graves and 2 of them were out of parish fees)
- 0 Scattering of ashes

#### **Memorials approved since the last report and up to end of December 2024**

- 13 memorial applications have been approved.

#### **Administration work since the last report and up to end of December 2024**

- 2 Assent of executor transfers – one of them out of parish fee.



- 1 Statutory Declaration
- 1 Renunciation
- 6 Deeds written
- 0 Living owners amending ownerships
- 6 Preselect graves purchased

**Officer ongoing tasks for the next quarter**

- Catch up on x16 deeds for new interments outstanding from August 2023 to the end of June 2024.
- Issue deeds for new interments July 2024 onwards once funeral finance has been paid.
- To co-ordinate planting of 4 trees at Atherstone Cemetery within budget set by Full Council and with the advice of HRJ Gould Ltd. To be publicised once completed.
- Action Plan to be updated to reflect updated work completed this quarter.
- Action 16.10.24 Recommendation 1 – 2025 – 2026 Contractor Work.  
Perennial Landscape to carry out in lieu of grass cutting when appropriate.  
Inside old graves self – set saplings/ weeds to be cut down.  
Sheepy Rd footpath – keep overhanging trees and shrubs cut back.  
Weed area by wooden fence frontage of Cemetery Extension Ground.
- Action 16.10.24 Recommendation 2 - Jobs identified as suitable for gravedigger / general contractor – quotations to be obtained for Full Council.  
Surplus soil to be used to fill in uneven ground  
Grave digger to be asked to clear and tidy the shuttered area at the bottom of the cemetery.  
Re-lay x6 blue brick cappings missing on front wall.  
Repair wooden fence on Sheepy Rd boundary.
- Action 16.10.24 Recommendation 3- Jobs for Community Payback to carry out at the cemetery  
Branches / twigs / leaf collecting  
Keeping palisade edges of cemetery boundary clear of weeds.  
Self-set saplings growing out the bottom of mature trees  
Edging footpaths  
Keep Armistice gate clear of weeds all year round  
Keep War Memorial area tidy all year round – edging and weeding  
Ashes Scattering Area needs a good tidy up – paths and borders.
- Action 16.10.24 Recommendation - 4 – Cemetery of the Year ICCM Self-Assessment questionnaire to review general standards and identify potential improvements. This had been completed by the Deputy Clerk and a score of 43 points was noted which is below the acceptable level of 50. The Deputy



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Clerk is asked to review the items requiring improvement with a view to raising the score to between 50-60.

- Action Recommendations from Cemetery Working Group 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024 as approved by Full Council 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025.

### **Cemetery Working Group tasks for the next quarter:**

Action Plan - Objective 2 Tree planting at the cemetery

Action Plan - Objective 1 – visit other newly developed cemeteries and investigate funding.

Volunteer Pathway - From 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 Full Council “It was RESOLVED to consider creating a pathway for volunteers with the main task of aiding with the maintenance of unattended graves at Sheepy Road Cemetery. This task was delegated to the Cemetery working group in conjunction with the Deputy Clerk”.

**Officer recommendation:** Allow reasonable travel expenditure (shared travel) for Cemetery Working group and Deputy Clerk to visit other newly developed cemetery/s as part of investigations into cemetery extension.  
(This is within stated Action Plan 3.2 Objective 1 Of Cemetery Management)

**This report was prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk 14.01.25**



## Appendix 1

### Cemetery Working Group Meeting - NWBC

**Venue:** Boardroom, NWBC

**Date and Time:** Wednesday, 18th December 2024, 7pm

**Working Group Members:**

- In attendance - Town Councillors Chambers (Chair), Barnett, Bishop, Braithwaite.
- Cllr Jones ([apologies](#))

**Supported by:**

- Deputy Clerk: Sally Oldham

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### AGENDA with Discussion Notes

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**1. 2024-25 Budget Position for Cemetery**

To consider spending to date and the remaining budget until 31st March 2025.

**Supporting documents:**

- Current Financial papers

[This was noted and referred to as part of the following discussions.](#)

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**2. Review of Cemetery Regulations** - last reviewed 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

- Review and agree next review date

[The Cemetery Regulations were noted and agreed with a suggested review date of every 3 years or as required. There was a discussion regarding cost and provision of benches in the cemetery \(P32 Item 13\) but it was considered this wording was still applicable.](#)

**Supporting documents:**

- Copy of Current Regulations 2021-2023

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**3. Review of Memorial Regulations** – last reviewed 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

- Review and agree next review date

[The Memorial Regulations were noted and agreed with a suggested review date of every 3 years or as required.](#)

**Supporting documents:**

- Copy of Current Regulations 2021-2023
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**4. Law Commission’s Consultation Paper on Burial and Cremation (deadline 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025).**

- Agree who will work on responses – delegated to working group from Full Council October 2024. 66 questions in total and we do not have to answer all of them.

It was agreed that not all of the questions applied to ATC but the most relevant ones would be addressed.

Cllr Braithwaite offered to draft responses where possible for:

- Chapter 2 Approaches to regulating burial grounds.
- Chapter 3 maintenance and burial specifications
- Chapter 6 Grave re-use and reclamation
- Chapter 13 The treatment of ashes after collection from crematoria.

The Deputy Clerk offered to draft responses where possible for:

- About You
- Chapter 4 Burial rights and memorials
- Chapter 5 Record Keeping
- Chapter 7 Closure and re-opening of burial grounds
- Chapter 8 Exhumation and building on disused burial grounds
- Chapter 9 Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Deputy Clerk would collate a full response document and circulate it prior to submitting

**Supporting Documents:**

- Download information here [Burial and Cremation - Law Commission](#)
- ICCM Law Commission Webinar – attended by the Deputy Clerk, Cllr Bishop and Cllr Chambers – see feedback to questions.
- [Law Commission consultation on burial and cremation - Ministry of Justice - Citizen Space](#) Consultation Questions.

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**5. HR Goulds** – update on tree planting project (4 trees) at Cemetery

Four locations were identified following a visit by Goulds to the cemetery. The group were happy to recommend this advice to full council.

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**6. Feedback from Cemetery Training Courses attended by the Deputy Clerk;**

- **SLCC: 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024** – Cemetery Matters: Looking to the Future.

**Supporting Document:** Course presentation

- **SLCC: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024** – Cemetery and Churchyard Safety and Memorialisation.

**Supporting Document:** Course presentation

These were noted.

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**7. Update from Cemetery Extension Consultants – DJOGS.**

**Supporting Document:** Email report due from Consultant.

Cllr Bishop, as chair of Full Council, agreed to call an Extraordinary Meeting as early as possible in the New Year to progress the planning application and points raised by DJOGS with associated costings. (Meeting called for 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025)



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## 8. 2025-26 Draft Budget for Cemetery

To consider proposed draft budget for Cemetery for the next financial year April 1<sup>st</sup> 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and any financial implications arising from this discussion process.

- Cemetery Fees Review for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025
- Consider treatment of mixed in / out of parish - on one deed - fee.
- “Buying back” plots discussion

The fee structure was assessed line by line and a draft is to be produced for recommending to Full Council.

Discussions considered several points when arriving at the proposed new fees:

- 1) Alignment of fees charged with other local authorities.
- 2) Ensuring cost of staff time was adequately reflected in the fee.
- 3) Also to reduce administration costs the pricing structure was simplified.
- 4) Balance of sustainable v maintenance costs – not to be subsidised from the precept.

The Deputy Clerk was asked to estimate what the supply, maintenance and administration costs would be for a single memorial bench for 10 years in order to check the figure against the proposed £1200.

Estimate:

Supply of bench and delivery – 2025 Price quoted 6.1.25 =	total £375*
First Installation costs including plaque and initial treatment =	total £75
Estimate £30 per bench average every two years for 10 years =	total £150
Administration cost for 10 years @ 30 mins every 2 years=	total £50
<u>Total</u>	<u>total £650</u>

Proposed In Parish Fee for one family – (out of parish x3 fee)                      total £1200

\*Note: Life expectancy of bench is 15years+

### Supporting documents:

- Forecasted Finance papers
- Other Authorities fees for comparison – Tamworth, Nuneaton, Coleshill, Mancetter
- Spreadsheet Comparing ATC fees to other authorities

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## 9. Summary of all recommendations from this working group to go to January 2025 Full Council.

- a) To approve the current Cemetery Regulations and review every 3 years or as required.
- b) To approve the current Memorial Regulations and review every 3 years or as required.
- c) To note the submission to the Law Commission’s Consultation Paper on Burial and Cremation - as delegated to the Working Group
- d) To approve the recommended locations for planting the four trees at the cemetery.



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- e) To note the Extraordinary Council Meeting called for 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to address agenda item 7- Cemetery Extension.
  - f) To approve the revised Cemetery Fees for April 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.
  - g) To investigate the use of S106 money towards the Cemetery Extension
  - h) To request at budget setting that consideration should be given to setting aside or building up considerable reserves for the Cemetery extension.
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